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4/6/50

TO : Department of State

FROM : THE HAGUE 601

755.00/4-650

REF :

RECD APR 7

ACTION EUR

INFO DCR OLI IE EUR/X

SUBJECT : REPERCUSSIONS IN NETHERLANDS OF LEOPOLD CONTROVERSY IN BELGIUM.

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Despite repeated warnings by Dutch political leaders that Holland should avoid involvement in the current Belgian political crisis, the conflict raging in Holland's neighboring state has begun to have its effects upon the domestic political climate. The vocal Dutch Socialist opposition to Leopold is fully matched by support for Leopold in most Catholic newspapers, the latter disregarding the advice of the Catholic leader, Professor Romme.

A very important element of the controversy, from the point of view of the Netherlands press, is the use of "political strikes" by the Belgian Socialists. The liberal, Catholic and right-wing press organs are very disturbed by the adoption of the strike technique by the Belgian Socialists. The official Socialist newspaper, HET VRIJE VOLK, has not commented editorially on the political strike, but gave lead space in its March 28th issue to a news story setting forth Spaak's attempted justification of his party's action. This has led ALGEMEEN HANDELSBLAD (Freedom and Democracy) to challenge HET VRIJE VOLK to present its own views on this subject. Algemeen Handelsblad points out that the Socialist organ has previously stated that political strikes are illegal, in connection with the Communist anti-arms campaign, but now refuses to indicate whether or not it has changed its position on the basis of the Belgian situation. So far, Het Vrije Volk has not responded.

755.00/4-650

For the Ambassador:

William T. Nunley

William T. Nunley
Attaché

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

APR 11 1950

FILED

WTNunley:wbw 3/31/50

Copy to Brussels.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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MAY 1 1950

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